

2020 LOCAL FOOD Initiative

ANNUAL
REPORT



King County

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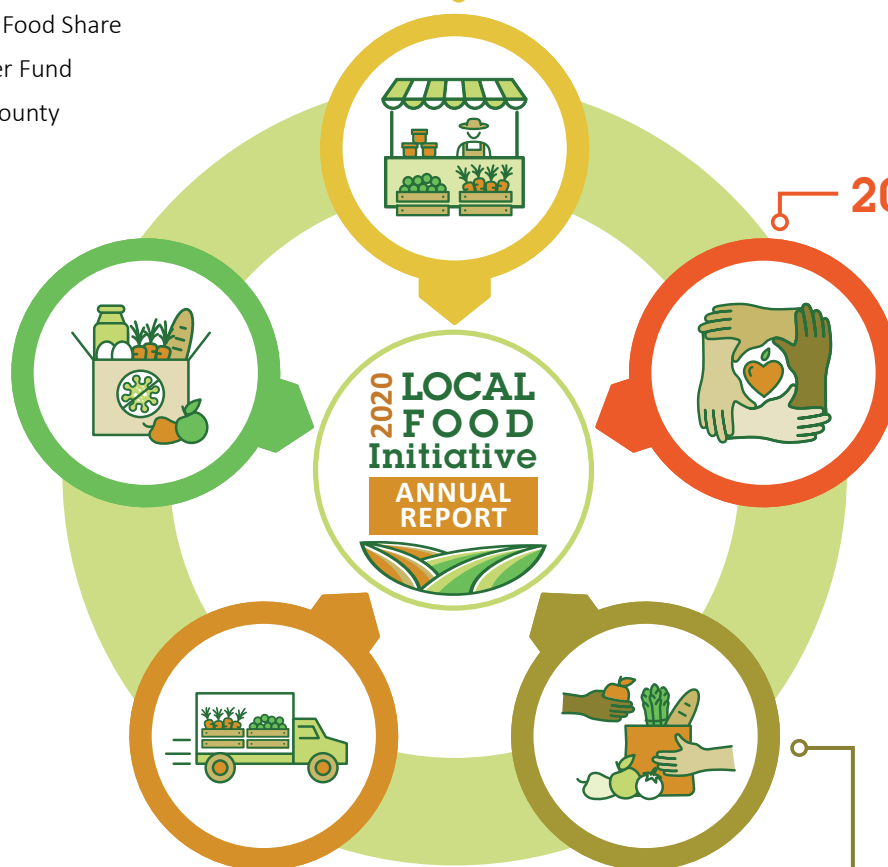
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Local Food Initiative team thanks partners for guiding this work and staff and community members not listed who contributed.

We gratefully recognize that food systems progress is due in large part to farmers, food access organizations, food entrepreneurs, and advocates, particularly those who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Because of your actions and advocacy, the future of food and farming is strong.

BLACK FARMERS COLLECTIVE

PLANT BASED FOOD SHARE AND CHEF ARIEL BANGS

FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK

KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT

TILTH ALLIANCE

SNOVALLEY TILTH

KING COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

BUSINESS IMPACT NW

WASHINGTON STATE FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION

HARVEST AGAINST HUNGER

WAKULIMA USA

NEIGHBORHOOD FARMERS MARKETS ASSOCIATION

SEATTLE FARMERS MARKETS

HMONG ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON

USDA

VIVA FARMS

SEATTLE GOOD BUSINESS NETWORK

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY FOOD SYSTEMS TEAM

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

VENTURES

AMP INSIGHTS

CITY OF SEATTLE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

WASHINGTON WATER TRUST

WASHINGTON FARMLAND TRUST

AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE NEW ROOTS PROGRAM

FRIENDS OF RAINIER BEACH URBAN FARM

FOOD ACCESS AND AGGREGATION COMMUNITY TEAM

KING COUNTY CLIMATE ACTION TEAM

ECONORTHWEST

LOCIVORE-STOCKED

RAINIER BEACH ACTION COALITION

EASTWEST FOOD RESCUE

SEATTLE-KING COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

SAFEWAY

HARBORVIEW MEDICAL CENTER

SEATTLE CHILDREN'S ODESSA BROWN CHILDREN'S CLINIC

COLECTIVA LEGAL DEL PUEBLO

PARA LOS NINOS

SOUTHWEST YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

LAKE BURIE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

LIVING WELL KENT

HIGHLINE COLLEGE URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK

ELK RUN FARM



LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT

While the pandemic has challenged nearly every aspect of our community, few have been hit harder than our local food economy.

Many farm and food businesses have struggled as the result of restaurants closing or operating at a limited capacity. More of our neighbors are experiencing food insecurity, many for the first time in their lives. And the pandemic has exacerbated racial injustices that make access to healthy, culturally relevant food inequitable.

I am grateful for the inspiring emergency response by our staff and partners to support local farms and food businesses throughout this public health crisis. This year's Local Food Initiative Annual Report shows how we joined forces for an immediate response to the disruptions caused by the pandemic while continuing to develop long-lasting solutions that will create a more sustainable, more resilient local food economy.

We know from experience that disruptions can foster innovation and creativity, offering once-in-a-generation opportunities to transform systems to make them more just and equitable. This is our opportunity to rebuild and strengthen the connections between local farms and food businesses to the people of King County so that we can all enjoy access to healthy, nutritious, homegrown food and beverages.



Dow Constantine, King County Executive





RESPONDING TO COVID-19

Coming together to support the farm and food industry in King County and beyond in response to COVID-19.

KING COUNTY'S LOCAL FOOD FINDER



PARTNERS

KING COUNTY LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE
FARM KING COUNTY TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE TEAM

In July 2020, King County launched the Local Food Finder map to help connect consumers with farm products in King County. This creative response to economic crisis brought by COVID-19 was launched by Farm King County's Technical Assistance Team and supported King County LFI efforts to offer a free and convenient way for residents to support local farms. The website was designed to make it easy for farmers to update data on food and product availability, new drop sites, and pick-up locations.

Want to know if farms deliver to your neighborhood?

Go to: kingcounty.gov/localfoodfinder



Get fresh produce



Find flowers, cheese,
berries and more

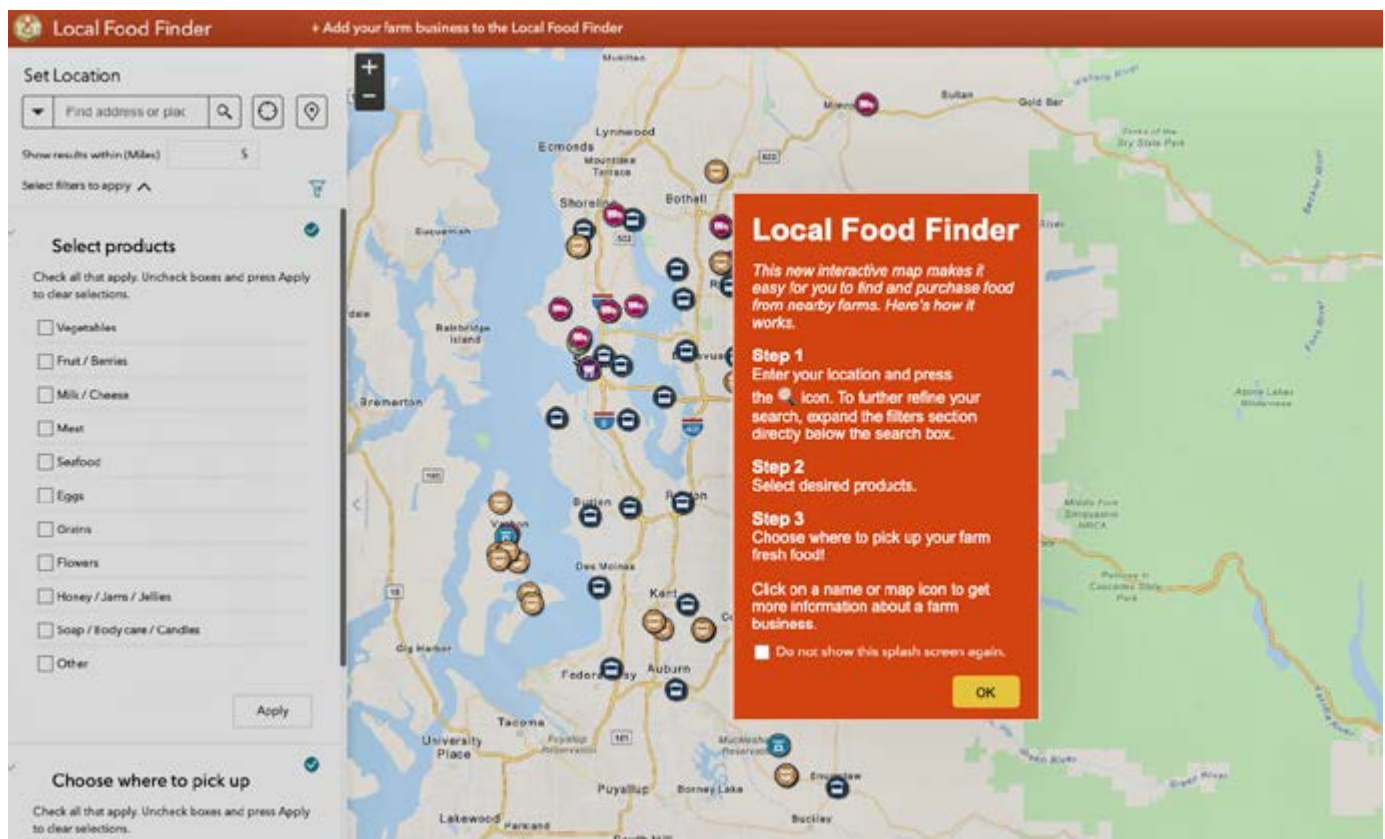
King
County's
Local Food
Finder



Connect to CSA's



Order directly
from local farms



SUPPORTING THE FARM AND FOOD SECTOR THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



PARTNERS

HARVEST AGAINST HUNGER
 BUSINESS IMPACT NW
 WASHINGTON STATE FARMERS
 MARKET ASSOCIATION
 KING COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
 NATURAL RESOURCES AND PARKS
 HMONG ASSOCIATION
 OF WASHINGTON
 PCC COMMUNITY MARKETS
 KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT

In 2020, the King County Council allocated \$1,380,000 to help King County farmers and farmers markets comply with public health and safety operating requirements to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to overcome losses due to COVID-19. In addition to supporting farm businesses and farmers markets, relief funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act will ensure continued access to fresh, local farm products by income-challenged residents of King County.

Included are grant programs for King County farmers markets impacted by COVID-19, funding to boost local farm product purchases by King County food banks and senior meal providers, and a technical assistance program for farm businesses to launch eCommerce marketing platforms.

Farmers Market Support Grants

This program assisted King County farmers markets comply with the Washington State Department of Health and Public Health – Seattle & King County safe operating requirements to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other losses attributable to the pandemic.

27 number of King County farmers markets supported
\$397,000 to funding disbursed



Farm to Food Bank and Senior Meal Providers

The relief funding allowed food banks and senior meal providers to purchase produce directly from farmers, which gives local farmers an additional, much-needed market option and increases access to fresh, local farm products by income-challenged residents.

\$297,000 distributed to hunger relief organizations for direct farm purchases

35 number of participating hunger relief agencies

51 number of King County Farms purchased from



Grants to Impacted Farm Businesses

This grant program reimbursed King County farm businesses for the unanticipated costs of responding to COVID-19. The relief funding will not only help farmers survive 2020 but will position them to enter the 2021 farming season in a stronger financial position.

22 number of farm businesses that received funding
\$110,885 total grant funds disbursed



E-Commerce Support Program

The 2020 “Ready to Sell” program was administered to farmers located in King County who were seeking to develop tools and strategies to effectively use farm-specific e-commerce platforms to sell their products.

16 Registered Farm Business applicants

50% had no e-commerce selling experience (*81% had no experience with a farm e-commerce platform*)



VIRTUAL CHOMP! SUMMER CAMP



PARTNERS

WAKULIMA USA
BLACK FARMERS COLLECTIVE
KING COUNTY DNRP

Since 2015, [CHOMP!](#) has supported King County Executive Dow Constantine's Local Food Initiative by celebrating local farmers, chefs and restaurants using locally sourced food, and local organizations specializing in healthy food, sustainability, and social justice. This year, King County's CHOMP! Summer Camp was a free virtual five-day event running August 24–28 where video content premiered for viewers to watch and participate in from home, including a look at a few of King County's farmers, cooking demos, educational activities, and performances.

Each year, CHOMP! partners with local organizations working to improve access to healthy, locally grown food in King County. Black Farmers Collective and Wakulima USA were the two beneficiaries selected this year.

CHOMP! BENEFICIARIES: WAKULIMA USA AND BLACK FARMERS COLLECTIVE

Access to farmland is a significant barrier for many farmers, especially Black and Indigenous farmers and farmers of color, whether they are just starting out or have extensive experience growing food. Recently, King County partnered with the Black Farmers Collective to assist in expanding their farm operation, Small Axe Farm, on property in the Sammamish Valley, to grow more healthy and nutritious food.

Small Axe Farm in Woodinville is a four-acre teaching farm where expansion efforts are currently underway. Expanding Small Axe Farm to land in the Sammamish Valley will allow Black Farmers Collective to increase both the number of farmers they work with and the market channels they serve. King County is supporting this expansion by leasing the property to Black Farmers Collective so that more local food can be grown for more people, especially communities facing health disparities who are disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.



The Black Farmers Collective is a Black-led mutual aid network of BIPOC farmers, organizers, and leaders creating a food system for healthier communities. Their three sites, Yes Farm in the Central District, Africatown Grow in Columbia City, and Small Axe in Woodinville are part of their efforts for land acquisition, BIPOC farmer development, community building, and educational programs. Learn more at blackfarmerscollective.com

Wakulima USA is a farming collective focusing on cultural affirmation, widespread access to healthy food, and fostering the growth of farmers and food entrepreneurs. Wakulima, which means "farmers" in Swahili, promotes sustainable farming by using underutilized land, and transforming it into vibrant community spaces that can generate culturally relevant food and income for growers. Learn more about Wakulima USA at wakulimausa.com.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WAKULIMA USA AND BLACK FARMERS COLLECTIVE

FARMERS MARKETS INNOVATE DURING COVID-19



PARTNERS

KING COUNTY FARMERS MARKETS
WASHINGTON STATE FARMERS
MARKET ASSOCIATION



In response to COVID-19 restrictions, [King County farmers markets](#) re-created many ways of doing business. While 30 of the 40 King County farmers markets were open in 2020, many opened later in the season or looked drastically different. Every farmers market operated with new signage requiring social distancing, limiting customers at a time, and moving booths 12 feet apart instead of side by side, which meant fewer vendors and fewer customers could be at farmers markets. In addition, COVID-19 restrictions meant markets were having to double staffing, leaving operations in the red.

Fortunately, the King County Council allocated \$410,000 of [CARES Act funds](#) for farmers market relief. This funding along with the innovative nature of many farmers and farm organization led to the development of online ordering systems, delivery services, and new pickup locations. Some markets even offered pre-sales for pick-up with online services as well as shopping at the market itself.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEATTLE NEIGHBORHOOD FARMERS MARKETS



PLANT BASED FOOD SHARE PROVIDES HEALTHY AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT PLANT-BASED MEALS TO COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES



PARTNERS

PLANT BASED FOOD SHARE
CHEF ARIEL BANGS



Plant Based Food Share (PBFS) is a community food program that provides healthy plant-based food boxes to Seattle area families facing food insecurity. PBFS was founded when Ariel Bangs, Executive Director of Plant Based Food Share, witnessed the need to offer healthy plant-based food boxes to urban communities in King County when COVID-19 began to impact everyone's lives in March.

PBFS serves low income, underserved urban communities who live in food deserts and includes African American, Indigenous, Latinx communities as well as BIPOC children, families, elders, and domestic violence victims. PBFS is designed to offer three things to clients receiving boxes:

1. Produce and pantry essentials for families to prepare meals during the week;
2. Healthy plant-based meals cooked by chefs of color; and
3. Tools to grow food at homes with limited space.

PBFS has provided food to over 22,270 families and supported local BIPOC farmers by incorporating over almost 575,000 pounds of their locally grown produce. PBFS has offered over 30,000 plant starts so that families can grow their own food indoors; 30,000 heirloom seeds; and provided over 2,000 plant based healthy meals from local BIPOC chefs.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PLANT BASED FOOD SHARE

"We do this work as a way to heal our communities and encourage healthy lifestyles for those that are underserved and have historically been unable to grow their own food or access healthy foods. Ultimately, we want to people to have access to healthy plant-based food, and we want them to think differently about how they are fueling their minds, bodies, and communities."

– Ariel Bangs, Executive Director of Plant Based Food Share

GOOD FARMER FUND PROVIDES EMERGENCY RELIEF TO FARMERS

The [Good Farmer Fund](#) was established in 2008 to provide emergency relief to market farms experiencing crop loss or setbacks from weather-related disaster (flood, fire and wind) or medical emergencies. Since 2008, Neighborhood Farmers Markets Association (NFM) has provided over \$310,000 to our farmers. In 2020, with the support of a large gift of stock, NFM established temporary resiliency grants to stabilize farms and food businesses experiencing a loss of markets, restaurant sales, or other financial setbacks due to COVID-19. Over \$350,000 in support enabled 71 farms and food producers to purchase coolers for crop storage, cover payroll expenses, and purchase supplies and equipment needed to pivot to online sales. This support enabled stability and resiliency in the local food community during an uncertain time.



PARTNERS

SEATTLE NEIGHBORHOOD
FARMERS MARKETS

“Thank you for your generous relief grant. We’ve been shocked with the endless challenges this 2020 year has presented us with. Not only with COVID, but also the wildfires that forced some market closures due to poor air quality. We lost about \$10,000 of product that weekend. Not to mention the labor expense that needs to be covered whether the product is sold or not. But thanks to your generous contribution we were able to minimize our losses that weekend, and your funds helped cover our workers’ labor expense. It’s been said before that farmers are eternal optimists, and this is what keeps us doing what we do.”

– Alvarez Organic Farms

FARM KING COUNTY: SHARING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL FARM COMMUNITY

Across the region, agricultural service providers deliver training on topics including technical farming, business development and funding, market access, and farmland access. Farm King County brings these service providers together with regular coordination meetings and hosts a website to keep farmers up to date on services and resources.

In the spring of 2020, King County farmers faced new regulations related to Covid-19 which impacted everything from food production to market outlets. The Farm King County team - a network of agricultural service providers - met weekly to share updates and keep everyone current on rapidly changing regulations and exchange knowledge of the resulting impacts so organizations could focus their support where it was needed most. [FarmKingCounty.org](https://farmkingcounty.org) added a robust section on Covid-19 regulations and resources.

While consumer demand for locally grown products expanded, farmers markets were temporarily suspended. Flower growers experienced unique challenges because many rely on farmers markets as their primary sales outlet. In addition, many flower growers are immigrants and refugees, and market accessibility and communication barriers only exacerbated an already challenging business landscape. The Farm King County team collaborated to detail ways to buy directly from flower growers, dedicate space on [FarmKingCounty.org](https://farmkingcounty.org) to share lists of purchasing options, and partner on a social media campaign to reach consumers interested in buying from local flower growers.



PARTNERS

KING COUNTY AGRICULTURAL
PROGRAM
KING CONSERVATION
DISTRICT
WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE
USDA
TILTH ALLIANCE
WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION
NORTHWEST AGRICULTURAL
BUSINESS CENTER
CITY OF SEATTLE
SNOVALLEY TILTH
BUSINESS IMPACT
NORTHWEST





GROWING THE FOOD AND FARM ECONOMY

Working to grow markets for local products
and increase demand for local products.

FARM KING COUNTY DATA CENTER TRACKS PROGRESS TOWARD LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM GOALS



PARTNERS

KING COUNTY DNRP
KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT
WASHINGTON STATE FARMERS
MARKET ASSOCIATION

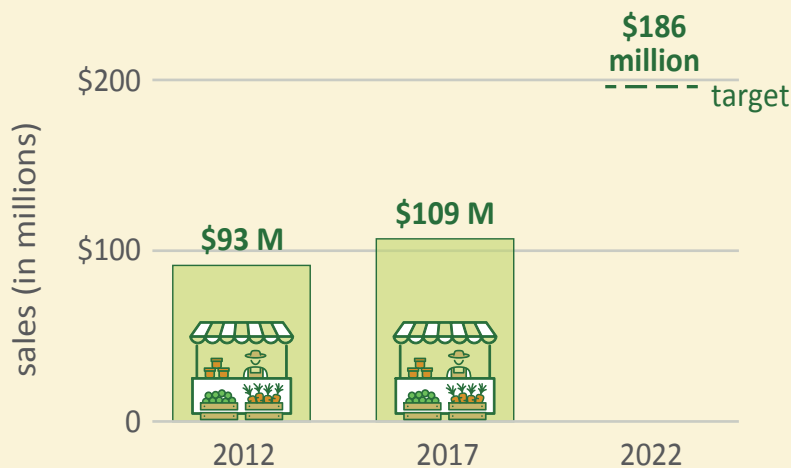
In 2018, Farm King County launched its Food Systems Data Center, which combines an interactive mapping platform with information and data on local agriculture to tell the story of King County's farm and food system. A major component of the data center includes food system performance metrics. These performance metrics enable us to track progress toward our goals under the Local Food Initiative, assess the health and viability of our local food system, and better inform the development of policy and funding decisions.

Within the past two years, the Data Center has been updated to include data and background information about King County farmers, farmland, and the farm economy. Throughout this report, you will see data shown in each section that support different food systems programs and topics. Visit [Farm King County's Data Center](#) for a closer look at how we are tracking our progress to meet important food systems goals.

Total sales of agricultural products

Target: Double demand for locally produced, healthy food from \$93 million to \$186 million in 10 years.

Rating:
Approaching
Target



Data: USDA NASS 2017

Example data. The yellow icon indicates that we are approaching our target but have not quite met it. For more information about this data and what the color icons mean, visit [Farm King County's Data Center](#).

START FARMING IN KING COUNTY RESOURCE GUIDE TO HELP FARMERS ACHIEVE THEIR BUSINESS GOALS

Together, King County, [Viva Farms](#), [SnoValley Tilth](#), and [Tilth Alliance](#) created a resource guide to assist and inform aspiring farmers in:

- Learning how to farm,
- Developing a business and marketing plan,
- Financing their farm business,
- Getting required permitting and licensing, and
- Finding a place to farm.

This guide provides resources, tips, and information on programs that can help farmers reach their farm business goals. No matter where farmers are in this process, whether they want to learn how to farm or they are ready to access credit to support and grow their operation, this guide can help farmers figure out where to start and assess the options available to them. [Download](#) the guide for more information and resources.



PARTNERS

TILTH ALLIANCE
SNOVALLEY TILTH
VIVA FARMS
KING COUNTY DNRP
USDA

QUICK LOOK: PROMOTING LOCAL FOOD PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION THROUGH OUTREACH



A key aspect of local food systems work is promoting partnerships and collaboration. Bringing dedicated food systems partners together to solve complex problems related to farmland access, infrastructure, food waste, and other issues can have collective and sustainable impact. The Local Food Initiative supports this work by sharing stories, highlighting food and farm innovators and entrepreneurs, and promoting new programs and funding opportunities through the [Local Food Initiative newsletter](#) and King County DNRP blog, [Keeping King County Green](#). Since November 2018, we have:

- Published 23 newsletters with a total of 94 articles as of December 2020,
- More than doubled newsletter subscribers from approximately 1,500 to 3,200 in December 2020, and
- Reached almost 4,000 people with our most popular article about flower grower support via the [Keeping King County Green](#) blog.

GOOD FOOD FORUM CONNECTS LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS



PARTNERS

SEATTLE GOOD
BUSINESS NETWORK
KING COUNTY LOCAL
FOOD INITIATIVE
KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT



In May 2020, Seattle Good Business Network launched [Good Food Forum](#), an online community on the Mobilize platform connecting local food system stakeholders serving King County around market opportunities, resource matching, and information sharing. The Forum includes 220 members and has resulted in numerous connections. Some of these collaborations include a restaurant chef pivoting to meal kit service and finding three new King County producers and a marketing avenue through a single post; King County farmers finding paid new market channels through food manufacturers, food box purveyors, and food assistance organizations; a new food manufacturer finding a co-packer for their wholesale products; and multiple grants and other financial resources being accessed, with one member having received two of those awards. Work continues to develop and grow membership in Good Food Forum in the coming year. This project was made possible through a King Conservation District Regional Food Systems Grant.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEATTLE GOOD BUSINESS NETWORK

WA MEAT UP COLLABORATION



PARTNERS

WSU FOOD SYSTEMS TEAM,
WSDA REGIONAL MARKETS

In 2019, a collaboration between Washington State University (WSU), Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), and King County launched the [WA State Meat Up Summit](#) in Seattle. After tours featuring Salumi, Jubilee Farm, and Falling River Meats, the summit featured small-scale livestock producers, processors, policymakers, and artisan cured meat businesses coming together to lay out meat needs and strategies to work on in Washington state. Key findings from this summit sparked an ag professionals group that meets bi-weekly led by WSU Food Systems Team, small-scale USDA processor meetings also facilitated by WSU, major support and economic recovery efforts from WSDA including the \$5 Million Meat Processor Pandemic Relief Grants in 2020, and a team effort to address the challenges and needs of meat producers and processors.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WSU FOOD SYSTEMS TEAM

The initial WA Meat Up event was held in 2019 before COVID-19 restrictions were in effect.



BUSINESS IMPACT NW FOOD BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER



PARTNERS

BUSINESS IMPACT NW
FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK
VENTURES NONPROFIT

The Food Business Resource Center (FBRC) is a one-stop-shop for Washington state food entrepreneurs to access skills, resources, networks, and marketplace opportunities needed to start, run, and grow a successful food-related business. After months of planning and stakeholder engagement meetings, the FBRC was publicly launched on March 7, during the [2020 Food Biz Day](#) event.

Here are a few of the highlights of 2020 and the work done by FBRC:



Food Biz Day 2020
engaged over **74**
regional participants.



**Hosted Food Finance
Institute-Food Finance Boot Camp**
that supported **6** established King
County food businesses.



**Developed and launched an
On-Demand Packaged
Food Course**
(in collaboration with Food
Innovation Network and
Ventures Nonprofit).
15 King County food
entrepreneurs have
attended to date.



**Hosted two cohorts of
Ready-to-Sell Farmer
Ecommerce Training**
Cohort One Washington
15 farmers, two in King County
Cohort Two King County only
(in partnership with King County)
16 participants



Worked one-on-one with **15** individual **Washington food and farm business
entrepreneurs** with technical assistance and resource navigation.



UNDERSTANDING IRRIGATION AVAILABILITY AND FARMERS' NEEDS IN KING COUNTY



PARTNERS

KING COUNTY DEPARTMENT
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND PARKS
AMP INSIGHTS

Many agricultural lands in King County lack access to irrigation water or do not have sufficient water to meet farmers' needs. To better understand the scope of this need, King County DNRP contracted with AMP Insights, a consulting firm focused on natural resources management issues, to complete an irrigation water needs assessment in King County. When completed in late 2021, the output will be a report detailing current irrigation water available in areas of King County with concentrated agricultural land, estimations of future use, and some recommended solutions to address the gaps between the two. A community outreach component will inform landowners about options for accessing irrigation water.





ADVANCING EQUITY

Working toward a food system that supports viable livelihoods for all farmers and communities.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WA FARM LAND TRUST

WORKING FARMLAND PARTNERSHIP: BUILDING BRIDGES TO FARMLAND ACCESS



PARTNERS

KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT
WASHINGTON FARMLAND TRUST
SNOVALLEY TILTH
KING COUNTY AGRICULTURAL
PROGRAM
VIVA FARMS
AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST
INTERNATIONAL RESCUE
COMMITTEE'S NEW ROOTS
PROGRAM
TILTH ALLIANCE

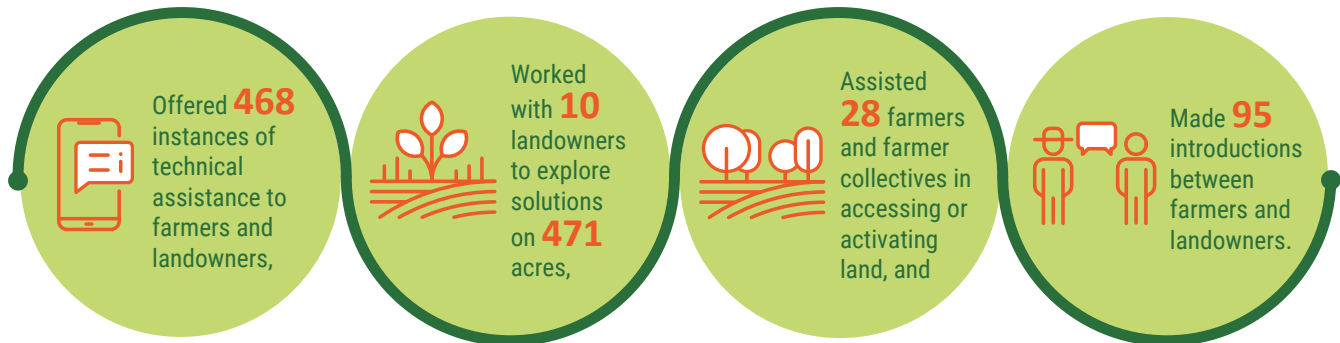
Access to land is a significant barrier for farmers. Rising land prices, competing uses, climate impacts, and urbanization limit access to farmland. For farmers of color, these challenges are compounded by a long history of systemic discrimination. In 2018, organizations and agencies focused on farmland access came together with a shared goal of ensuring a farming future in King County.

The [Working Farmland Partnership](#) (WFP) brings together the services of several organizations to support the successful transition of farmland. This includes partners who serve BIPOC farmers with the goal of ensuring all farmers have access to farmable land and land is maximized to its full potential.

The [King County Agricultural Team](#) walks properties with landowners and farmers, identifies barriers to production, and creates a plan for improvements. The team makes connections to service providers with expertise in technical farming, funding sources, market access, business planning, and permitting and regulatory processes.

The WFP has a track record of supporting farmers in their land access journeys, ultimately resulting in increased farmland in production and a greater number of farms in the county.

Since 2018, the WFP partners have:



RAINIER BEACH URBAN FARM INSPIRES THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS TO ENGAGE IN FOOD PRODUCTION




PARTNERS

TILTH ALLIANCE
FRIENDS OF RAINIER
BEACH URBAN FARM

At a time when community connections are strained and food security is of concern, it is inspiring to look at a program that is cultivating not just crops, but leadership. At [Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands](#) (RBUFW), young people are taking active roles to build a just and abundant food future that is vital to our sustenance and economy. They are working to develop connections with their community and farming through meaningful learning experiences in fields, farms, and kitchens.

Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands is a community hub for food, urban farming, and environmental education in Seattle's Rainier Beach neighborhood co-operated by Tilth Alliance and Friends of Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands.

The youth employment program at RBUFW expose young people to food production and wetland restoration techniques, but perhaps the most important part of this program is the team and community building that helps cultivate a connection to our food system.



"We want to show youth participants that farming is for everyone and they can do it too," said Suez Gebretsadik, Youth Engagement Coordinator. "Many youth members that I've worked with have never stepped foot in a garden or have experience growing their own food. RBUFW hopes to show youth how to farm in creative and engaging ways so they are invested in food production as well as their own personal and professional development."

CREATING OPPORTUNITY: A NEW VISION FOR KING COUNTY-OWNED FARMLAND



PARTNERS

KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SNOVALLEY TILTH

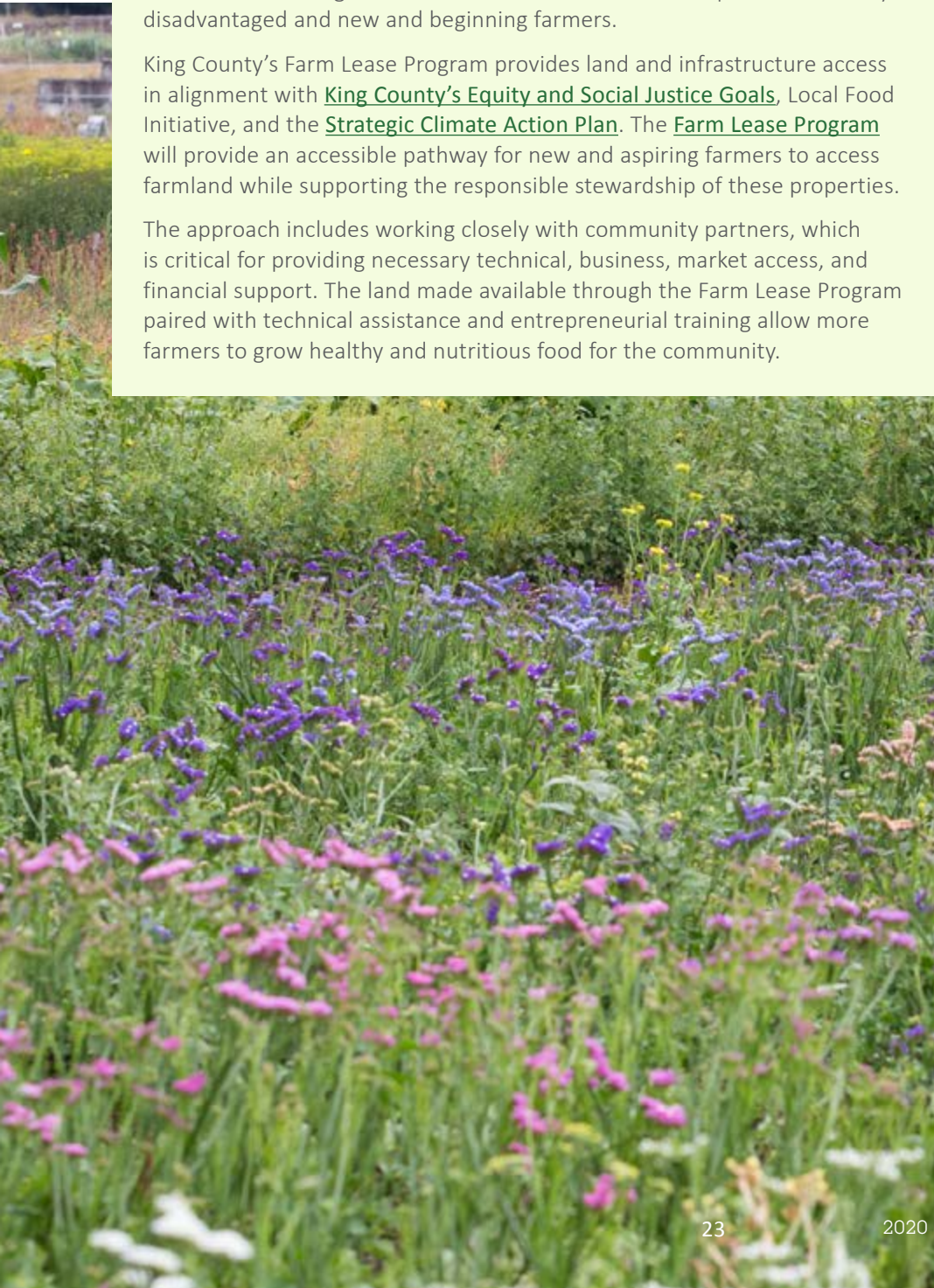
FOOD ACCESS AND AGGREGATION
COMMUNITY TEAM (FAACT)

WORKING FARMLAND PARTNERSHIP

Development pressures and competing land-use demands continue to make farmland in King County harder to come by and increasingly expensive. King County manages a portfolio of farm properties and recently re-envisioned the role this land could play in the landscape of the regional farm economy. County-owned farmland will provide a space for the establishment and growth of farm businesses with an emphasis on socially disadvantaged and new and beginning farmers.

King County's Farm Lease Program provides land and infrastructure access in alignment with [King County's Equity and Social Justice Goals](#), Local Food Initiative, and the [Strategic Climate Action Plan](#). The [Farm Lease Program](#) will provide an accessible pathway for new and aspiring farmers to access farmland while supporting the responsible stewardship of these properties.

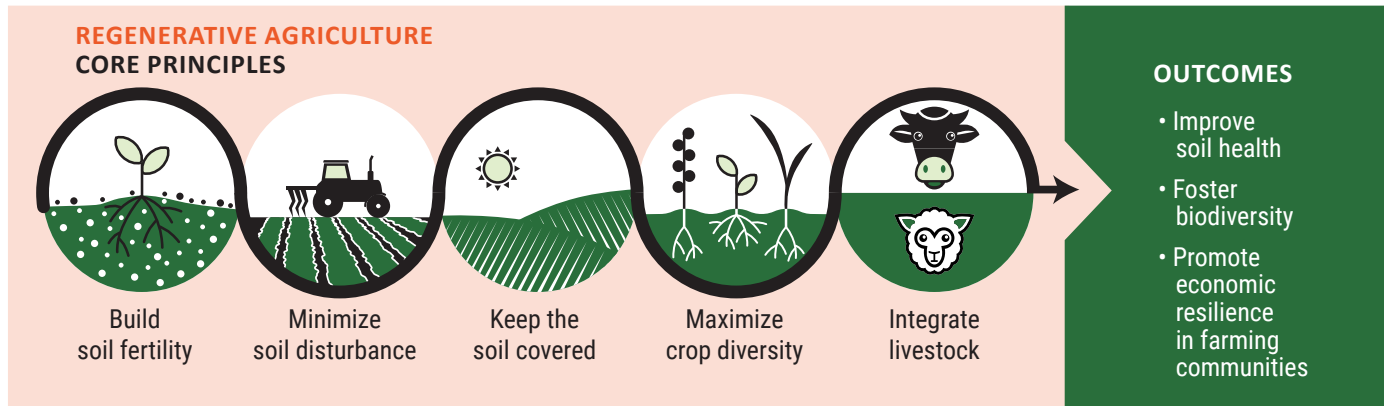
The approach includes working closely with community partners, which is critical for providing necessary technical, business, market access, and financial support. The land made available through the Farm Lease Program paired with technical assistance and entrepreneurial training allow more farmers to grow healthy and nutritious food for the community.



2020 STRATEGIC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

King County plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions countywide by 80% by 2050 and the [2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan](#) includes strategies that can reduce emissions from the farm sector and make the King County agricultural landscape more resilient to climate change.

Strategies to reduce emissions include accelerating farmland preservation, expanding the use of compost and recycled water, ensuring that farm plans include the impacts of climate change and strategies for climate resilient farms. Strategies that will prepare farmers and farmland owners for the impacts of climate change include conducting a countywide irrigation water needs assessment; preparing farm plans that stress regenerative agriculture; conducting a climate change impact assessment; examining infrastructure vulnerability, especially from increased flooding; and increasing farm participation in federal disaster insurance programs. There is also a focus on supporting farming communities of color, particularly immigrant, refugee, and Black and Indigenous farming communities, to improve land access and provide opportunities to build farming businesses and grow culturally appropriate food.





BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE

Working to meet farmer and community needs for food
system infrastructure in King County.

FOOD FACILITY FEASIBILITY STUDY: POTENTIAL FOR INFRASTRUCTURE TO TRANSFORM KING COUNTY'S LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM



PARTNERS

KING COUNTY SOLID
WASTE DIVISION
KING COUNTY LOCAL
FOOD INITIATIVE
BULLITT FOUNDATION
KING CONSERVATION
DISTRICT



Although our region is well known for its abundance of locally grown and produced products, the infrastructure necessary to support small and medium farms and food businesses, and non-profit organizations working to address food access, is severely lacking. Much of the existing food system infrastructure is either not accessible or not properly scaled.



In early 2020, King County's contracted with [ECONorthwest](#) to complete an assessment and business concept for a multi-purpose shared local food facility that would provide cold and dry storage, food processing infrastructure, and serve as a distribution hub for small food and farm businesses and non-profit organizations working in the food access and food recovery sector. This first phase project was completed in late 2020; it helped illustrate viability of a local food facility in the Seattle area. The feasibility study included

analyses of ownership models, economic modeling, and funding for a potential facility. The study is an important next step in the development of this much needed infrastructure that has the potential to have wide-ranging benefits including economic development, food waste reduction, job training, food access, and community development.



SPICE BRIDGE AT TUKWILA VILLAGE CREATES ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR SOUTH KING COUNTY FOOD ENTREPRENEURS



PARTNERS

FOOD INNOVATION
NETWORK



On Sept. 1, 2020, [Spice Bridge](#) became home to Food Innovation Network's Food Business Incubator Program, which supports under-resourced South King County residents, primarily women of color and immigrants. Spice Bridge is a place where food entrepreneurs have access to a commercial kitchen, restaurant space, and a community hub – a place where people gather to learn about and celebrate the community's rich food traditions.

[Food Innovation Network's Food Business Incubator Program](#) is helping entrepreneurs launch food businesses, providing training, mentorship, subsidized commercial kitchen access, and support with permitting, licensing, menu planning, and marketing. Food Innovation Network

continued capital campaign fundraising efforts throughout 2020, and by the end of the year had secured 90% of the \$850,000 goal. They are grateful to contributors who have helped make this community dream a reality. If you're interested in learning more or supporting Spice Bridge, please contact Kara Martin: kara@foodinnovationnetwork.org.

FIN'S FOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR

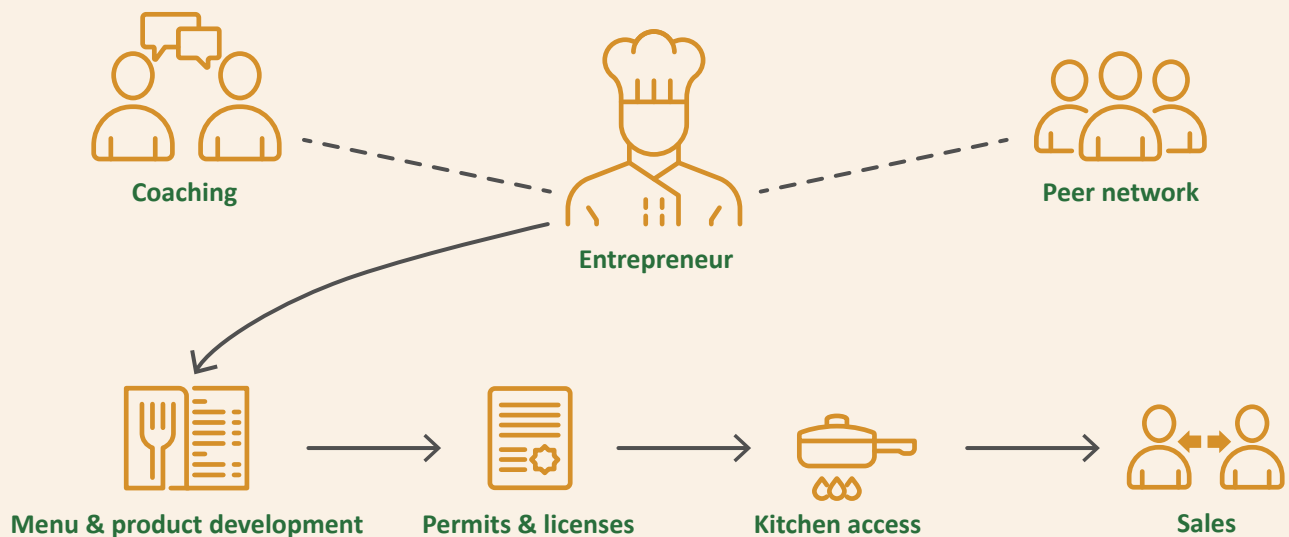


PHOTO COURTESY OF FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK

RAINIER BEACH FOOD INNOVATION CENTER BRINGS A COMMUNITY VISION FOR HEALTH AND JOB CREATION TO LIFE



PARTNERS

RAINIER BEACH ACTION COALITION
CITY OF SEATTLE

In 2012, Rainier Beach residents came together around a renewed neighborhood plan with a vision at the center of which food acted as a catalyst for neighborhood identity, cultural diversity and heritage, health and job creation. This past year, the City of Seattle approved funding to implement the [Rainier Beach Food Innovation Center](#), a project of Rainier Beach Action Coalition (RBAC), which is part of the Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan and the community's longstanding vision for the Rainier Beach Food Innovation District.

RBAC is a Black-led community organization that is actively seeking to address racialized economic disparity in a neighborhood where communities of color experience a high risk of residential and cultural displacement. With this funding, RBAC will proceed with closing on a site adjacent the Rainier Beach light rail station.

RBAC's Food Innovation Center is intended to create jobs and build on the many food cultures of Rainier Beach. The center will support economic opportunity through new small food businesses, as well as education and workforce development for Seattle residents. The concept includes classrooms and teaching kitchens, an entrepreneurship center, a marketplace, food production facility, and community services. Plans for the site also include critically needed affordable housing.

"Investing in community-based organizations to secure ownership of land is critically important for mitigating the impact displacement has on disproportionately impacted BIPOC communities. This is building on the local cultural assets, and setting a new community control of land and development model."

– Gregory Davis, RBAC Managing Strategist



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAINIER BEACH FOOD INNOVATION CENTER



INCREASING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS



Working to grow markets for local products
and increase demand for local products.

KING COUNTY FARMERS SHARE PROGRAM CONNECTS SMALL FARMS TO EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDERS TO SUPPORT HUNGER RELIEF



PARTNERS

HARVEST AGAINST
HUNGER
KING CONSERVATION
DISTRICT
SEATTLE NEIGHBORHOOD
FARMERS MARKETS
PCC COMMUNITY
MARKETS








As the second year of the [King County Farmers Share](#) (KCFS) program, initial 2020 program plans included refining the young systems created to support 12 pilot hunger relief partners. However, COVID-19's impacts on the region's food system beginning in March soon tested the strength and efficacy of the program model, in which agencies receive grant funds and technical support to develop contracted purchasing relationships with local farms. Even before the pandemic, Harvest Against Hunger knew creating more direct supply chains from new relationships between agencies that distribute emergency food and the farms that grow it will increase

resilience of the field-to-fork supply chain, ensuring fresh, healthy food goes to people rather than to waste. These facets of a localized food system were critical to addressing the increased food insecurity and economic instability brought on by COVID-19.

Ultimately, KCFS's existing structure, connections, and tools provided a foundation for replication to support hunger relief and small farms even beyond King County. Hunger relief partners appreciated the diverse, nutrient-dense foods available locally, from familiar blueberries and broccoli to kohlrabi and romanesco.

This program is generously funded by King Conservation District and in 2021, will support local small farms and emergency food providers and help to fill capacity gaps in transportation, storage, and long-term funding to ensure our local farm-to-food assistance network is successful and sustainable.

	PROGRAM OUTCOME	2019	2020
	\$ distributed to hunger relief for local farm purchasing	\$37,500.00	\$297,634.30*
	# of participating King County hunger relief organizations	12	15
	# of King County farms purchase from	24	51
	Lbs of produce purchased and delivered	20,592	90,792~
	Lbs of produce donated and gleaned	4,815	6,313

EASTWEST FOOD RESCUE IS HELPING FEED WASHINGTON AND SUPPORT FARMERS



PARTNERS

EASTWEST FOOD RESCUE

EastWest Food Rescue started from a Facebook post sent out at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic trying to rescue one ton of crops to distribute to food banks. In the first 15 days, they had rescued 217 tons of food.

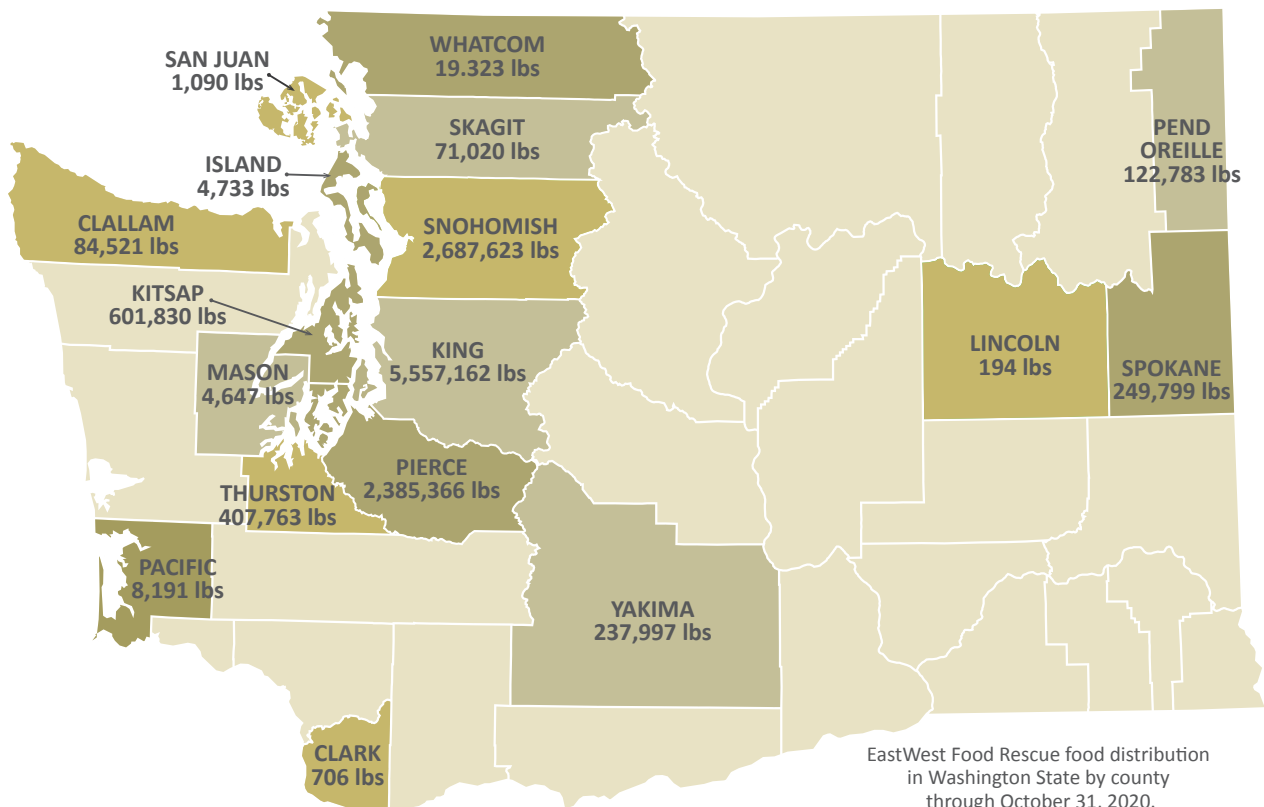
EastWest Food Rescue acquires or purchases surplus food predominately from farmers and distributes it with empathy to people in-need. As a volunteer led organization, EastWest coordinates every step from finding new sources of nutritious surplus food to organizing transportation to ensuring rescued food is given to people with food insecurity for free.



PHOTO COURTESY OF EASTWEST FOOD RESCUE

EastWest Food Rescue serves over 560 food banks, senior centers, community kitchens, grade-school food programs, Native American tribes, and other helping food organizations predominantly in the Northwest. They currently serve a total of 19 states.

CARINGLY FEEDING OUR NEIGHBORS IN WASHINGTON STATE



EXPANDING ACCESS TO PRODUCE THROUGH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE INCENTIVES



Food insecurity more than doubled in King County during 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, making the availability of food assistance even more important. To help address this need, the [Washington State Department of Health's SNAP Market Match](#) incentive program doubled SNAP users benefit dollars when they purchased fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets. Twenty-three farmers markets in King County participated in the SNAP Market Match program during the summer. Together they distributed



\$582,077 in SNAP benefits and incentive dollars to keep families fed with healthy produce purchased at local farmers markets. This is a 5% increase from the use of SNAP and fruit and vegetable incentives at farmers markets in 2019. Additional programs and support were provided by the City of Seattle's Fresh Bucks program.

The state program also supported incentives through the Complete Eats program and fruit and vegetable prescriptions that were redeemable at Safeway stores. An additional \$497,582 of incentives were distributed to SNAP users through these two programs to increase access to fruits and vegetables.



FOOD VOUCHER PROGRAM: ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY DURING COVID-19

From October to December 2020, Public Health – Seattle & King County contracted with 30 community-based organizations and two community navigators to distribute 21,500, \$100 food vouchers to community members experiencing food insecurity. King County directed federal [CARES Act](#) dollars to fund this program to address increased food insecurity in King County resulting from COVID-19. This funding supported Black and Indigenous communities, communities of color, low-income communities, immigrant and refugee communities, and communities that have been unable to access other forms of government aid due to structural or institutional barriers, including fear of deportation or those experiencing gender-based violence in King County. Over 90% of the food vouchers were redeemed in areas of South King County in communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and are experiencing food insecurity at higher rates.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEATTLE-KING COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

PROVIDING CULTURALLY RELEVANT FOOD THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMICS



PARTNERS

LAKE BURIEN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SOUTHWEST YOUTH &
FAMILY SERVICES
PARA LOS NINOS
COLECTIVA LEGAL
DEL PUEBLO



Community organizations developed new approaches to support families with food during the pandemic, and ways to make that food more culturally relevant. One example is [Alimentando El Pueblo](#), or Feeding El Pueblo, which began distributing culturally relevant food in the Highline area of King County in the summer of 2020. Cofounder Roxana Pardo Garcia of La Roxay Productions comments that, “People are thankful to have access to food banks, but

there’s something special about seeing food you’re familiar with.” Based at Lake Burien Presbyterian Church, community members could choose between a Mexican box that included items like Chile California and tortillas, a Central American box with items like condensed milk, or a Caribbean box with yucca and plantains.

Feeding El Pueblo received donations and grants to served 853 families and delivered 2,550 boxes of nonperishable items and produce in 2020. They worked to source produce from local Latinx grocers and farmers to support the community. “ Our hope with the project was to also invest directly in Latinx-owned businesses,” Pardo Garcia said.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEATTLE-KING COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

2020 LOCAL FOOD Initiative ANNUAL REPORT



King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Local Food Initiative

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Seattle, WA 98104

Alternative Formats Available
206-477-4700 TTY Relay: 711

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